

Appl. No. 10/597,124
 Reply to Office Action Dated October 23, 2007

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner has failed to produce a *prima facie* case of obviousness. First, there is no suggestion or motivation found in the prior art to substitute the metal turnings of Kunz or the unspecified material of the German reference with a Reusable Polymer Absorbent material as in the claimed invention. Second, there must be a reasonable expectation of success. The RPA material and the metal turnings are different materials and one wouldn't expect that they would perform the same function in substantially the same way.

Moreover, the prior art references even when improperly combined as suggested by the Examiner do not teach all the limitations of the invention as presently claimed in independent claims 1 and 7. For instance, claim 1 requires that "said large drops being further detached from the coalescing element upon a flow of the emulsion fluid;". Similarly, claim 7 requires "detaching said large drops from each bed by means of a flow velocity." Also claim 1 requires the presence of "one or more separating and guiding means, each separating and guiding means being associated with one coalescing element and being disposed at an output of the associated coalescing element to guide said detached large drops for further recovery and having a structure that is adapted to allow the continuous phase to flow through the separating and guiding means."

Claim 7 includes a guiding step using said separating and guiding means.

Reconsideration and allowance is therefore requested.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any fee associated with the submission of this response including the fee for the one month extension of time and any other fee necessary for the processing of this reply to Deposit Account No. 50-2183 (Reference Number 21.1197).

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